

PHILADELPHIA, PA.
BULLETIN

E. 718,167
B. 702,577

FEB 14 1966

Viet Nam's Villages

CIA Given Role In Pacification

Jerry ter Horst, writer of the following report, is accompanying Vice President Humphrey in his tour of Southeast Asia.

By J. F. TER HORST

Bulletin-North American Newspaper Alliance

Saigon—The Central Intelligence Agency, villain in every Communist piece of propaganda, is performing an unusual role in South Viet Nam's rural rebuilding program.



Humphrey

Nobody talks about it officially, but the CIA is primarily responsible for training the top native leaders who are charged with the job of helping Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky achieve his Johnson-approved goal of luring the farmers and peasants away from the Viet Cong.

The ploy, interestingly, is almost a carbon copy of the highly successful method the Viet Cong themselves have been using to woo Vietnamese villagers to their political cause.

This story can be told now because it is already known in North Viet Nam and Communist China.

It is all a vital part of the Declaration of Honolulu, initialed last Tuesday by President Johnson, Prime Minister Ky, and Viet Nam Chief of State Nguyen Van Thieu.

New Military Strength

Implicit in that doctrine, according to some American officials, is a belief that South Viet Nam, with the strong and continuing military and economic support of the U. S., has now provided itself a match for the enemy on the battlefield.

Thus, it has become necessary now to attempt to match the enemy in an equally vital but so far undone job—the herculean task of convincing the villagers and farmers in this predominantly agricultural land that the wave of the future is with the South Viet Nam Government, not with the Communists.

This is where the CIA fits in.

It has recruited approximately 50 young villagers, given them thorough anti-Communist indoctrination, and sent them back to organize their own hamlets for the South Viet Nam Government.

The young organizers have been carefully schooled in the art of recruiting followers in their villages, and establishing local political action teams to assist the peasants in solving small but important day-to-day problems.

These could be the basic establishment of a grievance committee with needed liaison to the province chief, or re-opening a school for youngsters, repairing a village well, or procuring needed medical supplies or seed rice or fertilizer.

But above all, the CIA-trained political activists are skilled at spotting Viet Cong infiltrators and either capturing or driving them out of their local area. They have been provided with American weapons, including submachine guns, as well as communication radio equipment.

Intimidated Villagers

As a result, Viet Nam's new leaders are able to go into a village and effectively assure the intimidated residents that they no longer need fear the Viet Cong because the new political action teams (called PATS) will protect them against terrorism, intimidation, and high taxes.

The expectation is that this CIA model of village Peace Corpsmen will be copied and expanded massively under the economic and political aid the Johnson administration, pledged to the Saigon government at Honolulu.

Initially, the PAT project will concentrate on enlarging the areas of government-held countryside around Da Nang, where U. S. Marines protect the vital U. S. air field; Quinton Province, and around Saigon itself.

Perimeters to Be Enlarged

If the Saigon government can successfully enlarge these three perimeters by 14 percent, it then can claim control over about 62 percent of the country's geography, a vital point in the diplomatic and military game of convincing the rest of Viet Nam, Asia, and the world that the Ky regime has staying power.

Attempts to pacify the countryside in past years have failed miserably, in spite of millions of dollars in U.S. aid money, because of poor planning, poorly-trained cadres, and failure to insist that the cadres stay in the area until the job was finished.

In spite of this dismal record, however, the Ky regime and the Johnson administration have decided it must be tried again, if for no other reason than that the war cannot be won if the people lack confidence and trust in the government.